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SURVEY OF SALARIES FOR SELECTED OCCUPATIONS IN SERVICES FOR THE BLIND, JANUARY 1966. FINAL REPORT.

BY- ROBERTS, HAROLD G. COLLINGWOOD, HUESTEN

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND, NEW YORK, N.Y.

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THE PURPOSES OF THIS PROJECT WERE TO (1) COLLECT CURRENT DATA ON SALARIES AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF PERSONNEL IN 26 PROFESSIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE OCCUPATIONS SPECIALIZING IN SERVICES FOR THE BLIND AND COMPARE IT WITH 1955 AND 1961 DATA, AND (2) PREPARE AND DISSEMINATE INTERPRETATIVE MATERIAL FOR FUTURE SALARY PLANNING. DATA COLLECTED FROM MAILED QUESTIONNAIRES SHOWED THAT SALARIES HAD INCREASED 28 PERCENT SINCE 1961, COMPARED TO 35 PERCENT BETWEEN 1955 AND 1961, AND THAT 3,800 PERSONS WERE EMPLOYED IN THE SELECTED OCCUPATIONS. TRENDS IN UPGRADING PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION WERE SHOWN BY THE CHANGE IN PREVALENCE OF MASTER'S DEGREES IN EACH OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY. BETWEEN 1955 AND 1966, THE NUMBER OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS HAVING THE DEGREE INCREASED BY 10 PERCENT, REHABILITATION TEACHERS BY 16 PERCENT, MOBILITY INSTRUCTORS BY 42 PERCENT, ELEMENTARY TEACHERS IN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS BY 7 PERCENT, VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SUPERVISORS BY 13 PERCENT, AND SOCIAL CASE WORK SUPERVISORS BY 20 PERCENT. THE NUMBER OF SOCIAL CASEWORKERS HAVING THE DEGREE DECREASED BY ONE PERCENT AND SECONDARY TEACHERS IN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS BY 11 PERCENT. (EM)

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FINAL REPORT

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Prepared by: American Foundation for the Blind, Inc.
Harold G. Roberts (Project Director),
Associate Director for Service
Huesten Collingwood (Project Coordinator),
Director, Personnel & Training Service

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I. Purpose of Project:

A. To collect current data about salaries and educational backgrounds of personnel in 26 professional and administrative occupations specializing in services for the blind.

B. Based on the above data, and comparable information obtained in similar surveys in 1955 and 1961 (1, 2) to prepare and disseminate interpretive material for use by boards of directors and administrators of local organizations, community planning bodies, legislators, etc. to assist in future salary planning.

II. Salary Survey:

A. Under contract with the American Foundation for the Blind, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics conducted a survey of salaries for the selected professional and administrative occupations by means of mail questionnaires. The Bureau of Labor Statistics compiled these data, prepared a statistical analysis and published a technical report of the findings. (3)

B. Major Findings:

1. Salary Raises are Lagging. Salaries for workers engaged in services for the blind were generally higher in January 1966 than in May 1961 for the professional and administrative occupations surveyed in both years by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. During this period, the increase in salary level for these occupations as a group amounted to 28 percent for all agencies, (or slightly more than 5% per year) and was about the same in both government and non-government agencies. This represents a lower rate of increase than the 35 percent experienced between October 1955 and May 1961 for the same occupations, (an annual increase of 7%), suggesting a slowdown in improving the quality of services for the blind as measured by the level of salaries paid to workers employed in the field.

2. 11,000 Workers for the Blind: The survey revealed that a total of nearly 11,000 persons were employed in direct service agencies. Of this number, about 5,400 were reported in professional and administrative occupations. The 26 occupations selected for study included nearly 3,800 persons, or almost 80 percent of all professional and administrative workers. (It should be noted that certain types of agencies were excluded entirely from the survey, such as national agencies, regional libraries and

publishing organizations.) Of the total of 11,000 workers in all categories, approximately 1,000 were employed in local day schools, 4,200 in residential schools and 5,800 in other agencies which provide vocational rehabilitation and general welfare services. About 10 percent of all persons working in the field were found to be part time workers (about whom detailed salary data was not collected) demonstrating the importance of part time work in the total manpower picture.

3. Trends in Professional Preparation: 1955 and 1966

The salary surveys conducted in 1955 and 1966 contained comparable material on the highest level of education attained by workers in the various occupations. Between these years significant efforts were made by the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration and other agencies to upgrade staff in local agencies by the development of new professional training programs and by expanded support of aid to existing programs. Selecting the criterion of the number of workers who have attained a masters degree or higher, the table shows the progress made during this period in selected occupations.

The highest rate of increase in the number of masters degree workers was found to be in the field of mobility instruction. This is not surprising in view of the fact that training programs on the graduate level became established during this ten year period. What may be more interesting is the fact that only 64 mobility instructors with masters degrees were reported, less than half of the graduates of the two established training programs. In the category of Supervisor of Social Casework, a relatively small group, the second highest rate of increase was reported in the number of persons with masters degrees, followed by Rehabilitation Teachers (Home Teachers). The latter group increased from only seven percent with masters degrees in 1955 to 22 percent in 1966. In view of the fact that virtually no graduates of university based training programs were turned out in these years, this rate of increase would seem to reveal strong interest in upgrading the field of rehabilitation teaching from within the field itself. A ten percent increase in the proportion of masters degree vocational rehabilitation counselors occurred in the two surveys, while there was virtually no change in the relative frequency of social caseworkers with masters degrees. Teachers in residential schools for the blind showed the smallest rate of increase in masters degrees, with a decrease of 11 percent in secondary level teachers who held masters degrees.

Table I

Change in Prevalence of Masters Degrees (and higher) for Selected Occupations

All Employers, 1955-66

	Year	Total#	# with Masters and higher	% Masters
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors	1955	180	48	27%
	1966	354	133	37%
	Change in % with Masters Degrees			+10%
Social Caseworkers	1955	210	56	27%
	1966	237	60	26%
	Change in % with Masters degrees			-1%
Rehabilitation Teachers	1955	199	14	7%
	1966	260	58	23%
	Change in % with Masters degrees			+16%
Mobility Instructors	1955	46	5	11%
	1966	120	64	53%
	Change in % with Masters degrees			+42%
Teachers in Residential Schools -				
Elementary	1955	392	81	21%
	1966	448**	124	28%
	Change in % with Masters degrees			+7%
Secondary	1955	108	45	42%
	1966	289**	89	31%
	Change in % with Masters degrees			-11%
Supervisor, Vocational Rehabilitation	1955	33	12	36%
	1966	71	34	49%
	Change in % with Masters degrees			+13%
Supervisor, Social Casework	1955	50	20	40%
	1966	71	43	60%
	Change in % with Masters degrees			+20%

** Includes a relatively few teachers employed in non-school settings.

III. Publication of the Findings:

A. Based on preliminary data made available in July 1966, a brief report was made to administrators of agencies for the blind at the annual convention of the American Association of Workers for the Blind.

B. The technical report published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics is on sale from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office for $.30. In addition, the BLS sent a copy of the final report to virtually all agencies and school systems which participated in the study. A supply is maintained at the American Foundation for the Blind for requests from individuals. The narrative summary of the technical report is reprinted in the April 1967 issue of the New Outlook for the Blind, published by the Foundation and will reach its 3000 readers.

C. The interpretive brochure is under development as this is written. Plans call for wide dissemination in the spring of 1967 to local agencies, boards of directors, community planning bodies, etc.

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[1] National Survey of Personnel Standards and Personnel Practices in Services for the Blind, 1955. Prepared for the American Foundation for the Blind by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and supported in part by the U.S. Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. December 1955.

[2] Salaries for Selected Occupations in Services for the Blind, May 1961. Prepared for the American Foundation for the Blind by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and supported in part by the U.S. Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, January 1962.

[3] Salaries for Selected Occupations in Services for the Blind, January 1966. Prepared for the American Foundation for the Blind by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and supported in part by the U.S. Vocational Rehabilitation Administration. December 1966.